

# CONNECTICUT TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL SYSTEM BOARD

## Minutes of Meeting October 21, 2014

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of State, the Connecticut Technical High School System Board (hereafter "Board") met on October 21, 2014, at J.M. Wright Technical High School, 120 Bridge Street, Stamford, CT

### **I. Call to Order**

Chairperson Trefry called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Present: Mr. Robert Trefry, Chairperson  
Mr. Joseph J. Vrabely, Jr., Vice Chairperson  
Mr. John Barrasso  
Mr. Stephan Bundschu  
Ms. Karen Eichstaedt  
Mrs. Patricia Keavney-Maruca  
Commissioner Sharon Palmer  
Mr. Fitz Walker

Absent: Mr. Matthew Nemerson  
Commissioner Catherine Smith

Ms. Barbara Mazzonna introduced two students Sunilka Jimenez and Jeremy Lopiano to the Board members, who shared their experience at Wright Tech and spoke about the on-line algebra program.

### **II. Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

### **III. Consent Agenda**

There were no items on the consent agenda.

### **IV. Executive Session**

There was no executive session.

## **V. Consideration of Minutes**

The board voted unanimously that the minutes of the September 15, 2014 meeting be approved.

Vote: In Favor: Barrasso, Bundschu, Eichstaedt, Keavney-Maruca, Palmer, Trefry,  
Vrabely, Walker  
Opposed: 0  
Abstained: 0  
Absent: Nemerson, Smith

## **VI. Report of the Superintendent of Schools**

### **Manufacturing Month**

In recognition of Manufacturing Month and to learn about current and planned manufacturing education programs at three of Eastern Connecticut's technical high schools (Harvard H. Ellis Technical High School in Danielson, Windham Technical High School in Willimantic and Ella T. Grasso Technical High School in Groton), the Connecticut Technical High School System sponsored the first of two precision manufacturing technology partner luncheons on Wednesday, October 15, 2014 at Harvard H. Ellis Technical High School. During the luncheon, Superintendent Torres discussed the Connecticut Technical High School System's short-, medium- and long-term goals under its Tomorrow's Framework 2014-17 Strategic Action Plan.

At the luncheon, General Dynamics- Electric Boat, Westminster Tool, Alpha Q (all supporting members of the Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance, or EAMA) discussed their company's skill needs as they relate to CTHSS manufacturing programs. Principals from the three participating schools: Ellis, Grasso and Windham Tech also talked about how their manufacturing programs are expanding and adapting to meet these needs. Sharon Palmer, Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Labor; also talked about how the Department of Labor is working with the Connecticut Technical High Schools and local companies to meet the needs of the manufacturing industry in Connecticut.

Over 70 guests also had the opportunity to tour the new Manufacturing Technology shop at Ellis Tech

Wilcox THS will be hosting a similar luncheon on October 24th and there will be an additional manufacturing luncheon hosted in the Western corner of the state in the near future.

### **Career Pathways TECH Collaborative – Eli Whitney & New Haven Public Schools**

Superintendent Torres attended a press conference with the New Haven Public Schools on October 14, 2014 at Eli Whitney THS to launch the Career Pathways TECH Collaborative Program. Programs include Weatherization/Carpentry, Plumbing and Heating and Manufacturing. Enrolled students are from various high schools and the adult education center in New Haven. A 12 lesson Youth Employability Skills course, taught by CBIA is infused in the yearlong program. Students meet Monday through Thursday from 3:30 – 5:30 PM for hands on technical training.

### **Aerospace Component Manufacturer's Future Workforce Seminar**

Superintendent Torres, Commissioner Smith of DECD and Dave Tuttle, Platt THS Manufacturing Head spoke at the Future Workforce Resource Seminar on October 7, 2014. The purpose of the seminar was to help small to mid-size member firms better understand the capability of today's entry level employees along with suggestions for how to turn such new employees into a productive part of business. They participated in a panel discussion moderated by Judy Resnick of CBIA. Superintendent Torres discussed the

Connecticut Technical High School System's manufacturing goals under its Tomorrow's Framework 2014-17 Strategic Action Plan.

### **Groundbreaking Ceremony Held for Emmett O'Brien Tech Renovation and Expansion Project**

On Monday, September 22, 2014, the official groundbreaking ceremony for the renovation and expansion project at Emmett O'Brien Technical High School was held in Ansonia, Connecticut. Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman was in attendance.

### **Ribbon Cutting Ceremony – Wilcox Tech Newly Renovated Expansion Project**

On Friday, October 17, 2014, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held to officially open the newly renovated and expanded Wilcox Technical High School in Meriden, Connecticut. Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman was in attendance.

### **Ribbon Cutting Ceremony - Ellis Tech Newly Renovated Expansion Project**

On Wednesday, October 22, 2014, a ribbon cutting ceremony will be held to officially open the newly renovated and expanded H.H. Ellis Technical High School in Danielson, Connecticut. All Board members are invited to attend.

### **6th E-House Grand Opening Celebrated at Bullard-Havens Tech**

The grand opening of the new E-House at Bullard-Havens Technical High School in Bridgeport, Connecticut was held on Wednesday, October 8, 2014. The E-House project is part of the state's technical high school system's 'green' approach to provide clean energy curriculum and hands-on experience for its architectural, carpentry, electrical, HVAC, plumbing and heating departments' faculty and students.

### **Day of German Unity Celebration in Connecticut– Friday, October 3, 2014**

On October 3, 2014, Superintendent attended the festive Day of German Unity Celebration at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford. Superintendent Torres was able to establish positive relationship linkages with folks from the UCONN Engineering Department along with reaching to German manufacturers to discuss their apprenticeship programs.

## **VII. Items Requiring Action**

There were no items requiring action

## **VIII. Items for Discussion**

### **A. Report on Student Transportation Vehicles (STVs)**

Section 10-97b (a) of the C.G. S., as amended by Section 72 of P.A. 12-116, requires the State Board of Education to replace any school bus that (1) is twelve years or older and is in service at any technical high school, or (2) has been subject to an out-of-service order, as defined in section 14-1, for two consecutive years for the same reason.

Section 10-97b (b) of the C.G. S., as amended by Section 72 of P.A. 12-116, requires the Connecticut Technical High School System (CTHSS) to provide a report to the Secretary of the

Office of Policy and Management and to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education and finance, revenue and bonding a report on the replacement of school buses in service in the Connecticut Technical High School System. Such report shall include the number of school buses replaced in the previous school year and a projection of school buses anticipated to be replaced in the upcoming school year.

Superintendent Torres and Mr. Chasse reported for the current 2014-15 school year, the Connecticut Technical High School System has zero (0) buses that will be removed from service in January 2015 due to the twelve year threshold. No buses will be removed from service due to out-of-service orders. The district will be purchasing nine (9) additional buses that are needed due to the reopening of J.M. Wright THS seven (7) buses and two smaller buses for transporting students to Health Care facilities where parking capacity is limited.

Superintendent Torres and Mr. Chasse responded to questions the Board members raised about the Student Transportation Vehicle Report which included how the CTHSS utilizes the STV's -- (response: to and from athletics & production worksites). A copy of the report is included in the official file of this meeting.

## **B. Report on School Expenditures by School**

Section 10-99g (b) of the C.G. S., requires the Superintendent of the Technical High School System to semiannually submit the operating budget and expenses for each technical high school, in accordance with section 11-4a, to the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, the director of the legislative Office of Fiscal Analysis and to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education.

Superintendent Torres and Mr. Chasse presented to the Committee the Report for the 2013-2014 school year and discussed the expenditure sheet included with the report. The total expenses for the 2013-14 school year were approximately \$179 Million. The schools budgets for fiscal year 2014-15 are still being finalized as the district awaits final approval of several federal grants. Once finalized, the school budgets will be transmitted to the General Assembly under separate cover and posted to the individual school websites as required by C.G.S. 10-99g (b).

Superintendent Torres and Mr. Chasse responded to questions the Board members raised about the expenditure report. A copy of the CTHSS Report of Expenditures by School (2013-14) is included in the official file of this meeting.

## **C. Admissions Policy**

Background: The Connecticut State Technical High School System (CTHSS), as part of its ongoing efforts to support and strengthen the development of a rigorous and equitable admissions and growth process, has completed a draft comprehensive evaluation of the current process used to recruit, admit and support the development of student career and technical skills throughout their tenure in the CTHSS. The CTHSS is working very closely with the CTHSS Board on the establishment of an admissions process for the 2015-16 School Year. At the September 15, 2014 Subcommittee Meeting on Quality and Policy, the committee members accepted the proposal to conduct a pilot to select students for the ninth grade class entering September 2015 and to utilize an assessment of readiness for the ninth grade curriculum.

Ms. Keavney reported that at the October 17, 2014 Quality and Policy Subcommittee meeting the Committee members met with UConn Researcher and Validation Expert, Mr. Shaun Dougherty who will be overseeing the pilot for the admissions policy. Mr. Dougherty has an extensive background in admission studies with other states including Massachusetts. Ms. Keavney reported that at their October 17, 2014 Subcommittee meeting, the Committee members recommended a formal proposal be presented to the full CTHSS Board at their October 21, 2014 meeting (today). The recommendation is to pilot for the 2014-15 school-year an admissions process that would include weighted grades for Language Arts and Math, attendance, and discipline as ancillary factor. In addition to this, a process from deviation from rank would be instituted to ensure there would be equal representation of sub-groups (Special Education and English Language Learners). The committee members agreed to not pursue the admissions test for the next incoming class.

At today's CTHSS Board meeting, Superintendent Torres introduced Barbara Mazzonna, Education Consultant to the Board members. Ms. Mazzonna presented Mr. Dougherty's PowerPoint to the Board members which included a Massachusetts case study, considerations in Connecticut, unbiased and objective admissions, the current admission process and a proposed approach which included options for admissions criteria which included: Proposal 1 - Objective Scoring, Proposal 2 – Randomization and Proposal 3 – Block Randomize/Rank. Her presentation also included weighing an admissions test, and proposed admissions criteria.

The Board members engaged in a discussion regarding the complex admissions process which included the need for a timeline, negatives of a lottery process, reasons not to pursue the admissions test, how a new application process will help reach more diversity, filling vacancies, reaching more youngsters, capacity issues, practical math and science and life skills, and afternoon programs for students who are not accepted.

Superintendent Torres assured the Board members that this proposal is a thoughtful process guided by the Federal Office of Civil Rights and that the CTHSS is not drafting a policy at this time, but rather conducting and engaging in an internal research process and collecting data to determine a more equitable and balanced admissions approach.

Mr. Trefry called for a motion to not pursue the admissions test for the 2014-15 school year.

Ms. Keavney-Maruca moved, Ms. Eichstaedt seconded that the CTHSS Board not pursue the admissions test for the 2014-15 school year and directs the Superintendent to take the necessary action.

Vote: In Favor:	Barrasso, Bundschu, Eichstaedt, Keavney-Maruca, Palmer, Trefry, Vrabely, Walker
Opposed:	0
Abstained:	0
Absent:	Nemerson, Smith

A copy of the PowerPoint presentation "Updating the CTHSS Admissions Process" is included in the official file of this meeting.

## **IX. Report of the Chair**

Mr. Trefry congratulated Superintendent Torres for being named Latina Citizen of the Year by the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission. On Saturday, October 11, 2014, the Latino and

Puerto Rican Affairs Commission's (LPRAC) Board honored Superintendent Torres with its annual Latina Citizen of the Year Award. Superintendent Torres was one of only two Connecticut residents who was selected for this award this year.

**X. Committee Reports**

**A. Quality and Policy**

Ms. Keavney-Maruca reported that the committee met on October 17, 2014 and discussed the Admissions Pilot. Ms. Keavney reported on the committee discussion earlier in the meeting under Item VIII.C.

**B. Outreach and Finance**

Mr. Vrabely reported that the committee met on October 21, 2014 just prior to today's board meeting. The committee had a discussion on student transportation vehicles, school expenditures by school, CTHSS trade credentials and the CTHSS's marketing campaign. Mr. Vrabely requested that a copy of the CTHSS trade credentials be forwarded to all CTHSS Board members.

**XI. Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

**XII. Adjourn**

The CTHSS Board adjourned its meeting at 3:00 p.m.

Prepared by: *Diane Curtis*  
Diane M. Curtis, Administrative Assistant  
Connecticut Technical High School System